

**March, 2004**

# **ERIE COUNTY CLERK'S**

## ***2003 Annual Report***

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***DAVID J. SWARTS***

**Erie County Clerk**

***[www.erie.gov/clerk](http://www.erie.gov/clerk)***

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

2003 was a banner year in the County Clerk's Office. Gross receipts totaled \$97.27 million, with \$86.97 million of that amount distributed to the State, the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, cities and town governments. Our net operating surplus for 2003 was a record \$2.43 million – nearly double that of 2002. For the 17th consecutive year, the Erie County Clerk's Office delivered excess revenue back to Erie County taxpayers. With interest rates at record lows once again in 2003, the number of deeds (28,072) and mortgages (60,749) filed hit an all-time high of 88,821. Interest rates also fueled mortgage refinances and vehicle sales, resulting in gross revenues and net revenues to the county that showed substantial growth over 2002—a year that had experienced significant increases over 2001—continuing a strong trend in Erie County.

The ongoing renovation of Old County Hall and its Annex at 25 Delaware Avenue will leave the Clerk's Office with less space than was previously allotted to the Office. This Office has been managing the twin problems of growing volumes of records and less space to store them with an aggressive approach to technology. In 2003, the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of County Hall was converted to record storage— and was immediately filled to capacity.

The lack of space is a continuous and growing problem. Despite our best efforts, there will most likely be insufficient space to accommodate growing records volumes. In 2003, plans began for a Regional Records Management Facility, with a comprehensive study to take place in 2004.

Continuous changes were made in the Website of the Clerk's Office ([www.erie.gov/clerk](http://www.erie.gov/clerk)) which essentially keeps our Office open for business 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. The site lists the records we keep, our telephone numbers, hours of operations, procedures for accessing records or making various applications, and direct access to records. The site also provides links to state and federal offices such as the Department of Motor Vehicles (for driver's license and registration forms) and the United States State Department (for passport applications). Changes made in the site have been well received. The County Clerk's website received over 150,000 "hits" last year and ranks as one of the top county websites visited.

In the Erie County Auto Bureau, the collection of \$28.64 million (including sales tax) in gross revenue resulted in the retention of \$2.93 million for the County. Auto Bureau revenues increased by \$146,220 (5.2% percent) over the previous the year. It is likely, however, that there will be a drop in revenues in 2005 because of the drivers' license renewal cycle which the state has instituted.

On the state level, as an active member of the State Association of County Clerks, I have lobbied for both increases in fee sharing for services which we provide, as well as the retention of portions of fees related to the many services which the Auto Bureau is

currently required to perform for the state without reimbursement.

The new Mobile Auto Bureau was launched with great fanfare beginning in July in Evans and Grand Island. By October, locations were added in Concord and Clarence, conveniently serving the public on a weekly basis in each of these corners of the County. The “Mobile Unit” also captures revenues for Erie County that might otherwise go to neighboring counties.

The Orchard Park Auto Bureau moved to a new location in September at a cost savings over the previous site. Now customers at our busiest Auto Bureau are welcomed to a brighter, more spacious environment.

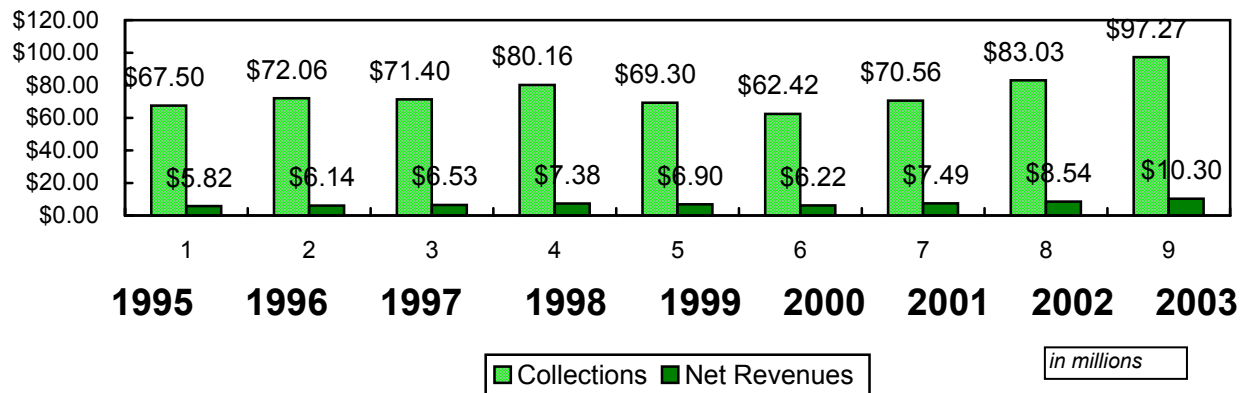
At the County Clerk’s Office, we look forward to continuing exemplary service to our customers while returning substantial sums to the County coffers during the upcoming year.

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### 1995-2003 COMPARISON

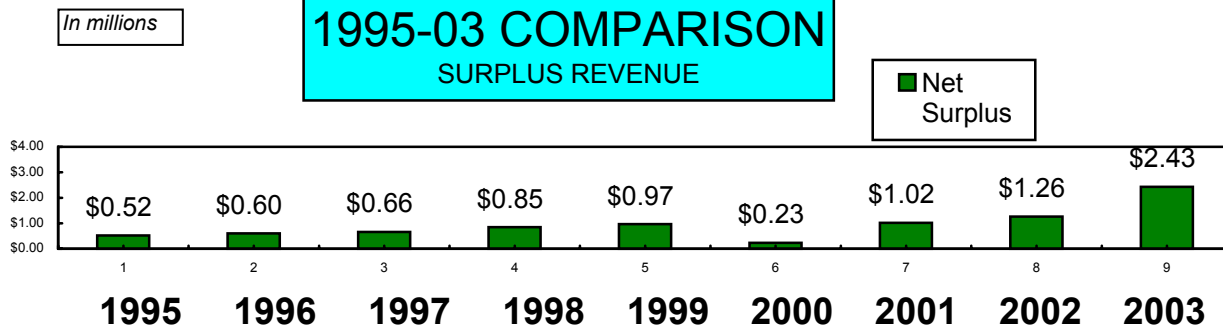
COLLECTIONS/NET REVENUE



The Erie County Clerk's Office collected \$97.27 million in gross revenue and \$10.30 million in net revenues for the County in 2003. The County Clerk's Office not only covered all of its expenses, but returned an additional \$2.43 million in surplus for County residents. This marks the 17th straight year that revenues exceeded expenses. Over that span the Clerk's Office has produced over \$17.5 million in surplus revenue.

### 1995-03 COMPARISON

SURPLUS REVENUE

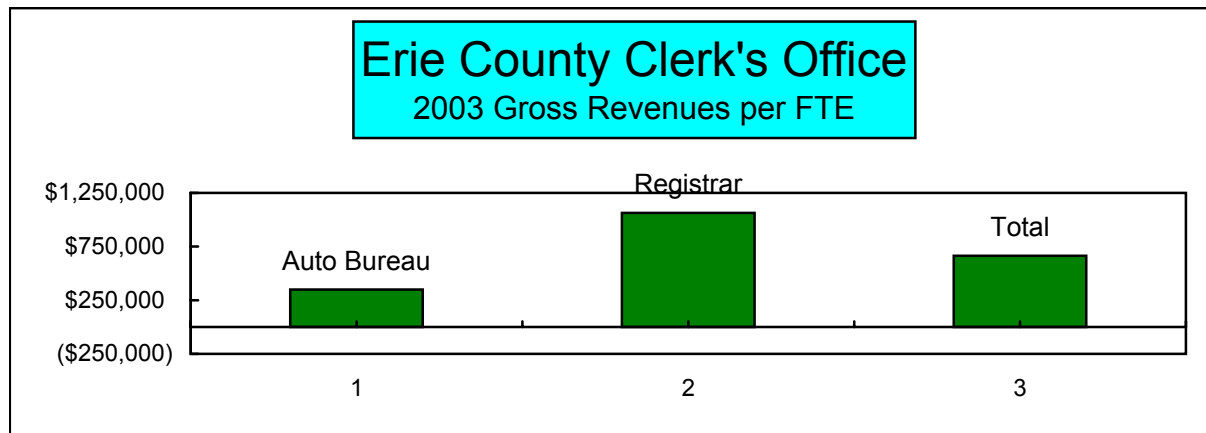
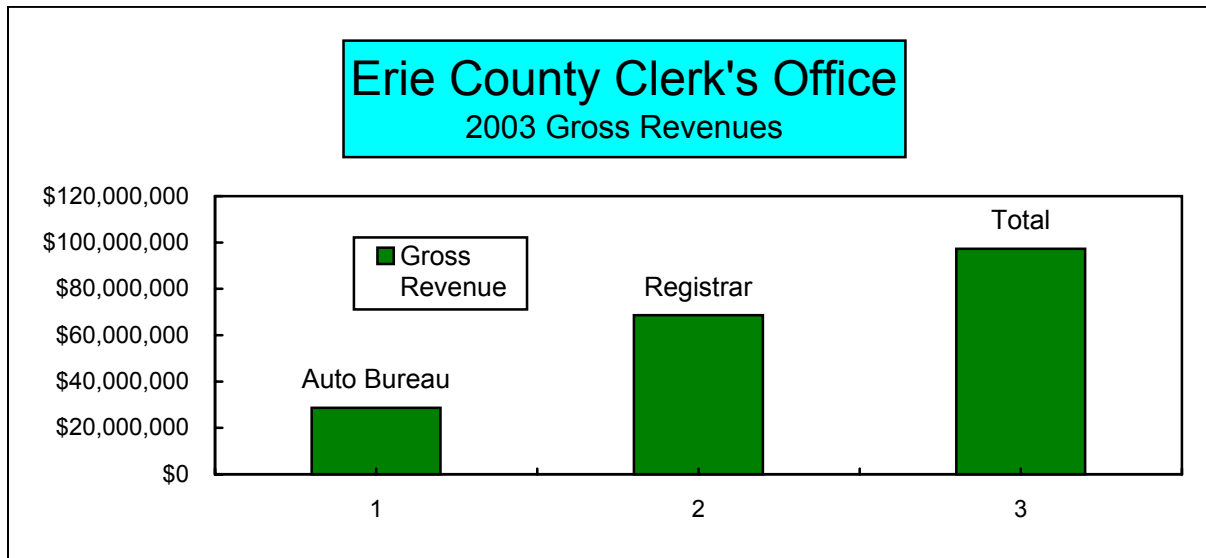


*In 2003, the electronic imaging system provided customer services for a vast array of uses, including remote access, specialized reports, and microfilm customers. This has created new gains in revenue. In Year 2004, more new customers will access the system through the Internet, further enhancing business uses, customer service and revenue potential in the Erie County Clerk's Office.*

### 1995-2003 Comparison

In Millions	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>Collections</b>	\$67.50	\$72.06	\$71.40	\$80.16	\$69.30	\$62.42	\$70.56	\$83.03	\$97.27
<b>Net Revenue</b>	\$5.82	\$6.14	\$6.53	\$7.38	\$6.90	\$6.22	\$7.49	\$8.54	\$10.30
<b>Net Surplus</b>	\$0.52	\$0.60	\$0.66	\$0.85	\$0.97	\$0.23	\$1.02	\$1.26	\$2.43

Revenue Per Employee			
	Auto Bureau	Registrar	Total
Full Time Equivalents (FTE)	82	64.5	146.5
Gross Revenue	\$28,642,000	\$68,630,000	\$97,272,000
Gross Revenue per FTE	\$349,293	\$1,064,031	\$663,972



## **REGISTRAR'S DIVISION DESCRIPTION**

This division is responsible for recording, filing and maintaining records related to land transactions, real estate, corporations, assumed names certificates, State Supreme Court and County Court papers and the Uniform Commercial Code. It provides a central repository for legal documents required to be recorded or filed. Responsibility for the administration of pistol permit issuance was transferred to the County Clerk from the State court system in 1987. Accordingly, the division issues and processes permits. Mortgage taxes and real estate transfer taxes are also collected by this division. The Registrar's Office began accepting U.S. Passport Applications in November 1997, and it also issues hunting and fishing licenses.

Through a co-investment strategy, the County Clerk takes unencumbered funds and directs them to the County Comptroller to invest in guaranteed investments. This unencumbered money is invested along with other County monies to maximize the return on the investment. This, in turn, increases the County's revenue on invested money. In 2003, interest income for the County Clerk's Office totaled \$30,404.

The County Clerk's Electronic Imaging System, which went on line February 22, 1994, has been upgraded several times over the past 10 years. The Clerk's system was added to the Erie County Network in 2002, not only giving internal users better response time, but also giving other County departments access. Erie County Social Services, Tax Mapping, Sewers and ECMC all have direct access to the Clerk's system, effectively reducing staff time in those Departments. The Clerk's Office has approximately 80 customers in the office connected to the system through the Erie County Network for use by staff and the public.

In 2002, the Clerk's imaging system changed from AT&T Intranet access to full internet access. Customers can access up-to-the-minute data and images at no charge, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. There is a charge of \$5.00 per document to obtain the image of an actual document on file. In 2003, there were more than 200 customers from all across the United States with monthly agreements for obtaining images, generating additional revenue for the County.

Many of the Clerk's older records have been scanned and imported into the system. Now many maps, naturalization records, Graves Indices and mortgages back to 1980, and deeds back to 1960 are available on image. These documents no longer need to be reproduced on copiers, and maps can be printed full scale on a plotter in the Clerk's Office or on a map printer in clients' offices.

During 2004, the Clerk's office will be installing new software for cashiering, indexing, scanning, accounts receivable, mortgage tax and internet access to replace the current system. The software will include a capability for a front end indexing system that will allow remote users to initiate a cover page to speed the process once the transaction is brought to the counter. This new software will help the Clerk's office take advantage of new technology to further enhance efficiency of operations.

A Total Quality Management program within the County Clerk's Office has been developed and successfully put into practice since 1993. Employees are included in the decision-making process, thereby restructuring and improving the way business is being conducted.

The **Core Team** of the County Clerk's Office has been meeting since 1993. The 12-member team consists of managers and representatives from all areas of the Clerk's Office. This team was originally put together to spearhead the installation and implementation of the Electronic Imaging System project.

The Team spent much of 2003 preparing for a move to renovated space in Old County Hall. Core Team members also plan to continue their efforts to improve communication among staff members and users of the office. Techniques on improving customer service, increased cross-training and exploring ways to make the office more efficient are ongoing goals.

The **Title & Search Team** of the County Clerk's Office has been meeting regularly since 1993. It is made up of volunteer representatives from various title companies, a Erie County Bar Association representative from the Real Property Committee, and members of the Clerk's Office. The team continues to address new items such as filing procedures and data recovery. This particular partnership between the private and public sector has proven to be successful, since it provides a mechanism for resolving real and potential issues. This team will be instrumental in assisting with the new software system once instituted in 2004.

The **Monthly Briefing Team** discusses issues of concern within the office, and makes recommendations and suggestions routinely to the Core Team for implementation. It draws from a wealth of knowledge among staff members.

Erie County Clerk's Office staff members have been exposed to new educational opportunities, honing their skills through cross-training as well as computer training offered to county employees by Erie Community College. The Registrar's Office is extremely proud of its service objectives, processing over 1 million customer service transactions in 2003.

As Clerk of the Courts, the division is responsible for filing and maintaining all court records of the New York State Supreme Court in Erie County and the County Court in Erie County, in accordance with New York State law.

Revenues attributed to the operation of the Division of the Registrar are derived from fees obtained for the recording, processing, and filing of legal documents and records, the issuance of licenses and permits, mortgage taxes and real property transfer tax revenues retained as prescribed by state law.

**REGISTRAR'S DIVISION  
PROGRAM AND SERVICE OBJECTIVES**

**The Erie County Clerk's Office is responsible for the following procedures:**

X To record and file documents required or entitled to be filed under New York State law including deeds, mortgages, discharges, leases, assignment of mortgages, powers of attorney, certificates of incorporation, and partnership and doing business under an assumed name, liens, real estate brokers entitlements to commissions, bail bond liens, local laws, wage assignments and pistol permits.

X To provide efficient, effective customer service to taxpayers and residents of Erie County.

X To provide access and assistance to the public for inspection of all filings and recordings.

X To record all judgments entered in Erie County and The New York State Supreme Court and maintain current status of judgment records.

X To process all court papers submitted for civil actions and proceedings, and criminal cases on appeal.

X To administer the processing of pistol permit applications, the issuance of pistol permits upon the direction of an Erie County court judge, and maintain existing permit files.

X To issue certificates, exemplifications, certified copies, executions against real and personal property.

X To serve as an agent of the state government with the renewal of notary public commissions, sale of hunting and fishing licenses, the collection of mortgage, real property transfer, and capital gains taxes, and the collection of court fees.

X To serve as an agent of the federal government by administering declarations of intent of individuals seeking U.S. citizenship.

X To accept United States Passport Applications for the U.S. Department of State.

X To administer and file oaths of public officials, notaries public and commissioners of deeds.

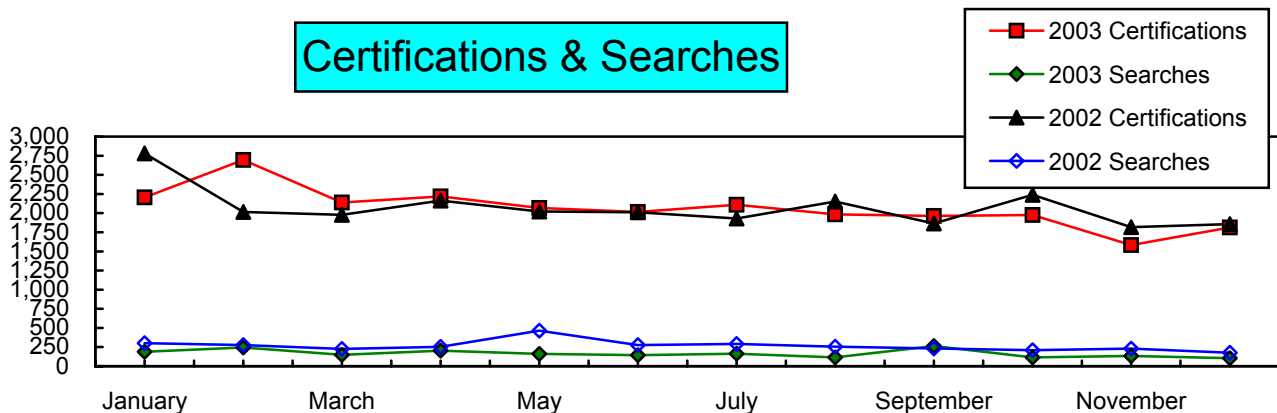
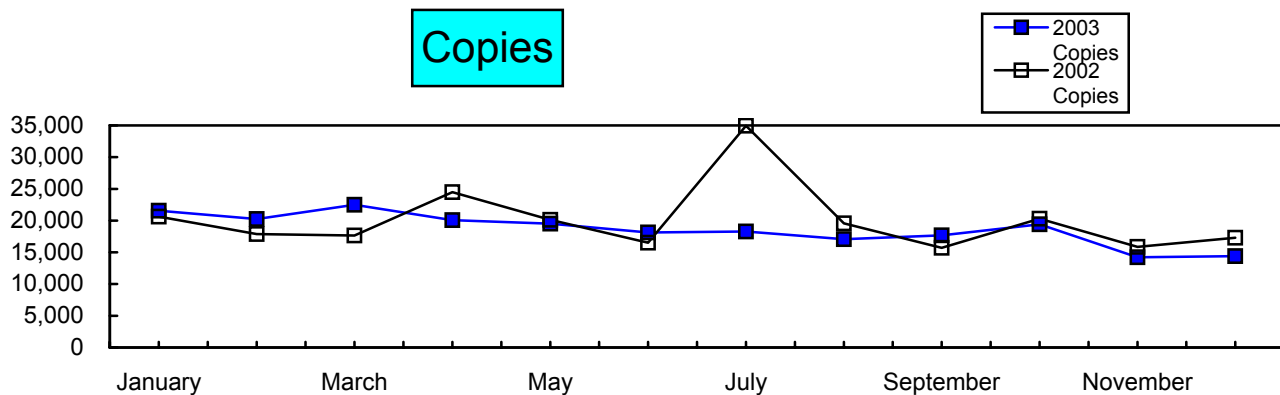
X To properly collect, record, deposit and monitor all fees and taxes collected, and to assure required distribution as prescribed by law, regulation or agreement.

X To sign all bond certificates issued by the County of Erie.

**Copies, Certifications & Searches**

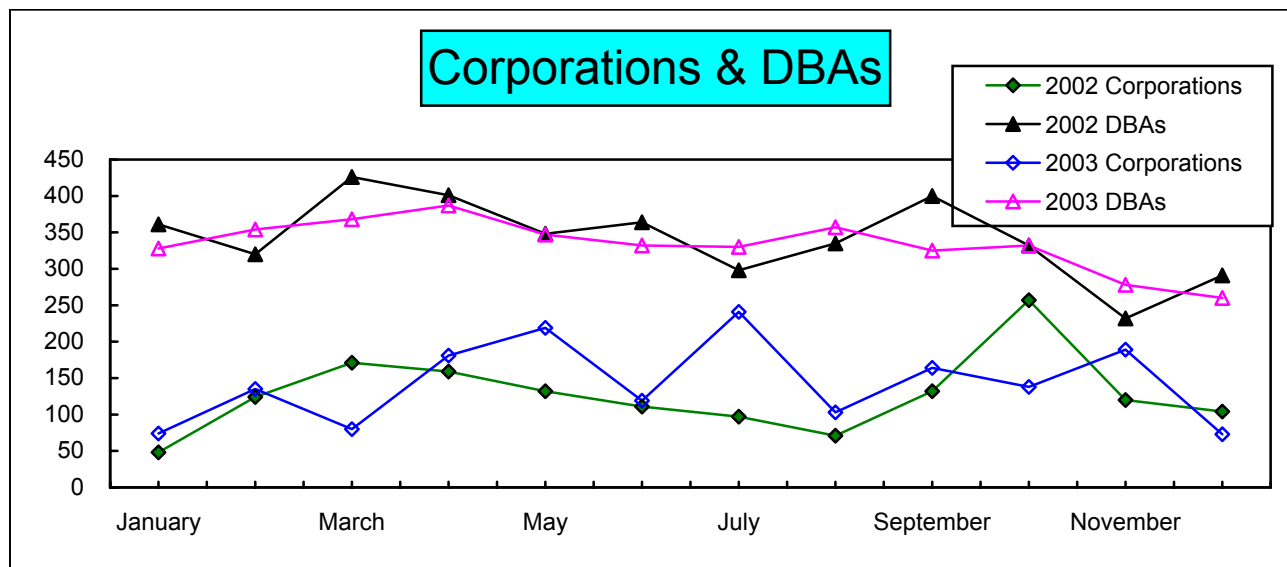
2003	Copies	Cert.	Search	2002	Copies	Cert.	Search
January	21,553	2,206	188	January	20,637	2,780	301
February	20,245	2,695	245	February	17,877	2,015	276
March	22,498	2,139	148	March	17,647	1,977	226
April	20,075	2,218	203	April	24,478	2,163	252
May	19,527	2,067	160	May	20,128	2,021	465
June	18,123	2,016	144	June	16,505	2,012	275
July	18,285	2,109	163	July	34,954	1,929	291
August	17,077	1,984	114	August	19,577	2,151	256
September	17,672	1,963	263	September	15,715	1,865	232
October	19,429	1,975	114	October	20,296	2,239	209
November	14,220	1,582	133	November	15,860	1,816	230
December	14,403	1,812	105	December	17,308	1,856	176
2003	223,107	24,766	1,980	2002	240,982	24,824	3,189
Month Ave.	18,592	2,064	165	Month Ave.	20,082	2,069	266

The Erie County Clerk's Office made 223,107 copies of documents in 2003 and issued 24,766 certified copies during the year. The office also accomplished 1,980 searches requested in 2003 down from previous years. This decline can be attributed to the success of the internet access made available at the Clerk's Office.

**Certifications & Searches****Copies**

Corporations & DBAs					
2003	Corp.	DBAs	2002	Corp.	DBAs
January	48	361	Jan	74	328
February	124	320	Feb	135	354
March	171	426	Mar	80	368
April	159	401	Apr	181	387
May	132	348	May	219	347
June	111	364	Jun	119	332
July	97	298	Jul	241	330
August	71	335	Aug	103	357
September	132	400	Sep	164	325
October	257	332	Oct	138	332
November	120	232	Nov	189	278
December	104	291	Dec	73	260
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,526</b>	<b>4,108</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,716</b>	<b>3,998</b>
Month Ave.	127	342	Month Ave.	143	333

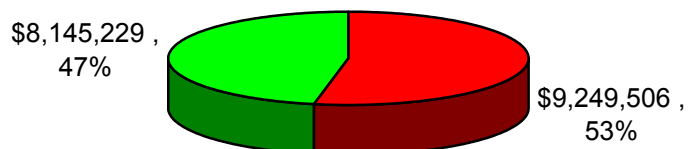
In 2003, a total of 1,526 Certificates of Incorporation and 4,108 Business Certificates (DBAs) were recorded in the Erie County Clerk's Office.



Transfer Tax	
EC Road Fund	\$9,249,506
To NY State	\$8,145,229
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,394,735</b>

New York State receives 4/10ths of 1% in Transfer Tax collected by the County Clerk when a deed is recorded. Erie County receives 5/10ths of 1% collected. The Erie County Clerk disbursed the funds to the County Road Fund.

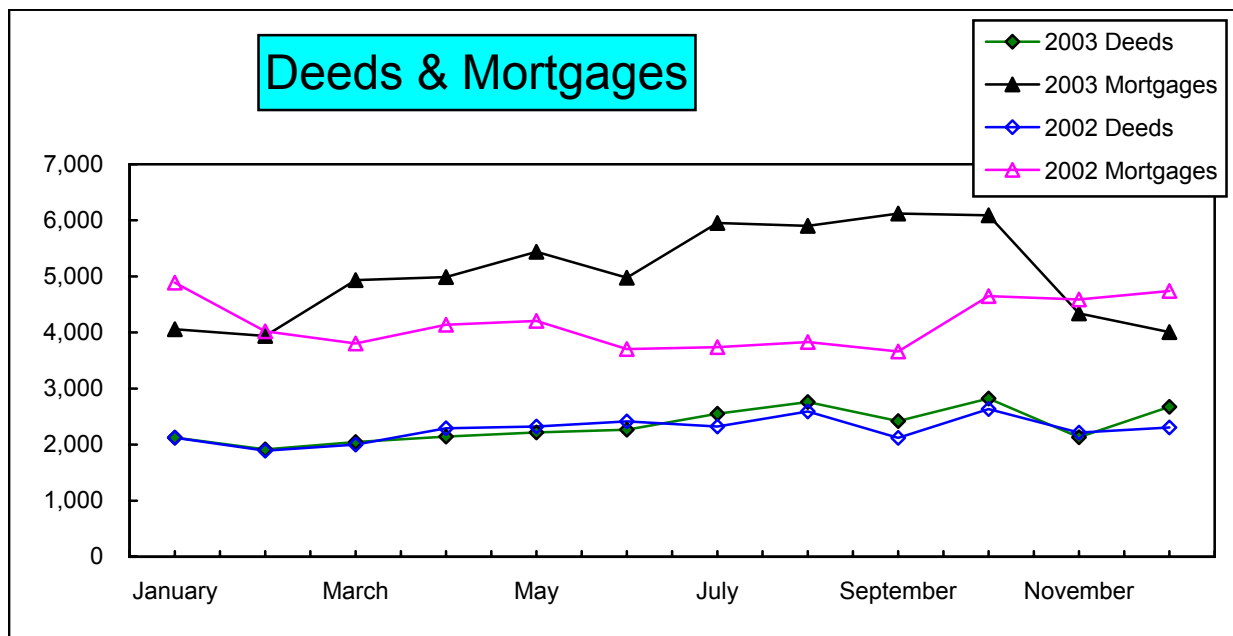
### Transfer Tax



<b>Deeds &amp; Mortgages</b>				
<b>2003</b>	<b>Deeds</b>	<b>Mortgages</b>	<b>Discharges</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>January</b>	2,127	4,059	3,341	984
<b>February</b>	1,915	3,939	3,202	792
<b>March</b>	2,045	4,933	4,504	910
<b>April</b>	2,143	4,987	3,063	737
<b>May</b>	2,216	5,440	4,396	1,028
<b>June</b>	2,266	4,977	3,331	807
<b>July</b>	2,552	5,953	4,033	920
<b>August</b>	2,759	5,902	2,713	773
<b>September</b>	2,421	6,121	3,648	848
<b>October</b>	2,821	6,090	5,080	1,372
<b>November</b>	2,133	4,341	4,749	856
<b>December</b>	2,674	4,007	4,629	671
<b>2003</b>	<b>28,072</b>	<b>60,749</b>	<b>46,689</b>	<b>10,698</b>
<b>Month Ave.</b>	<b>2,339</b>	<b>5,062</b>	<b>3,891</b>	<b>892</b>

<b>2002</b>	
<b>Deeds</b>	<b>Mortgages</b>
2,124	4,887
1,891	4,021
2,001	3,805
2,291	4,137
2,322	4,207
2,415	3,705
2,323	3,738
2,591	3,831
2,119	3,661
2,633	4,649
2,214	4,590
2,307	4,741
27,231	49,972
2,269	4,164

Lower interest rates increased mortgage transactions to historic levels in 2003-- a 22% increase over 2002. Meanwhile the number of deeds changing hands in Erie County remained constant. Assignments in the above chart also include blanket assignments, which are multiple assignments of mortgages on a single document.



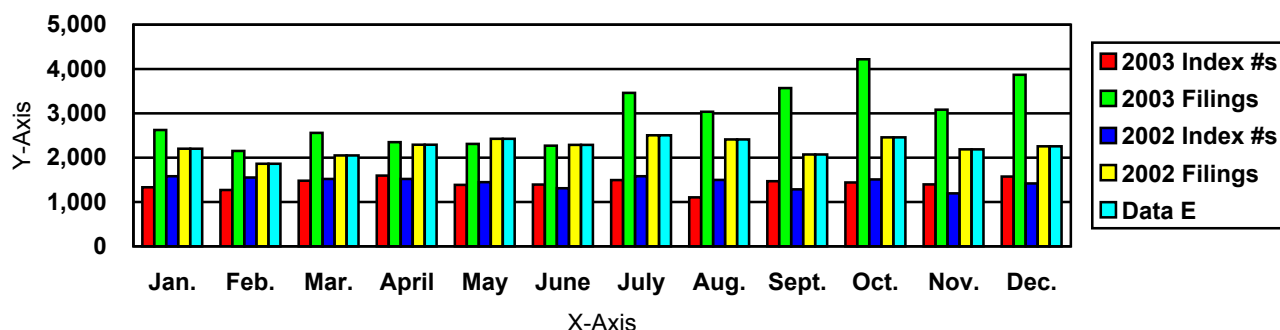
**Note:** A "Discharge" is a document filed with the County Clerk to show complete payment of a real estate loan. "Assignment" is a document recorded in the County Clerk's Office that shows how a mortgage holder has re-assigned the ownership of a mortgage to another entity.

Index #s & Court filings		
2003	Index #'s	Filings
Jan.	1,333	2,625
Feb.	1,269	2,151
Mar.	1,479	2,560
April	1,594	2,350
May	1,388	2,311
June	1,394	2,271
July	1,493	3,463
Aug.	1,106	3,036
Sept.	1,471	3,572
Oct.	1,439	4,219
Nov.	1,398	3,084
Dec.	1,573	3,871
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,937</b>	<b>35,513</b>
<b>Month Ave</b>	<b>1,411</b>	<b>2,959</b>

2002 Comparison	
Index #'s	Filings
1,580	2,202
1,554	1,864
1,520	2,049
1,521	2,293
1,449	2,425
1,309	2,289
1,583	2,506
1,497	2,413
1,285	2,073
1,510	2,458
1,196	2,189
1,420	2,256
<b>17,424</b>	<b>27,017</b>
<b>1,452</b>	<b>2,251</b>

The County Clerk is responsible for recording & filing court documents. Index numbers are purchased & used to file a wide variety of court documents (new civil/criminal case filings, additional papers in existing cases, divorce/separation case files, and other documents). In 2003, Index filings were up 18 %.

### Index Numbers & Court Filings

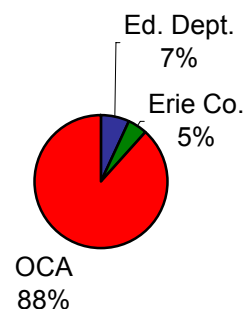


### Court Fund Disbursement

Ed. Dept.	\$270,962
Erie Co.	\$186,775
OCA	\$3,511,550
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,969,287</b>

The County Clerk's Office collected \$3,969,287 in court fees. Of that \$3,511,550 went to the Office of Court Administration, \$270,962 to the Commissioner of Education, and \$186,775 to the County.

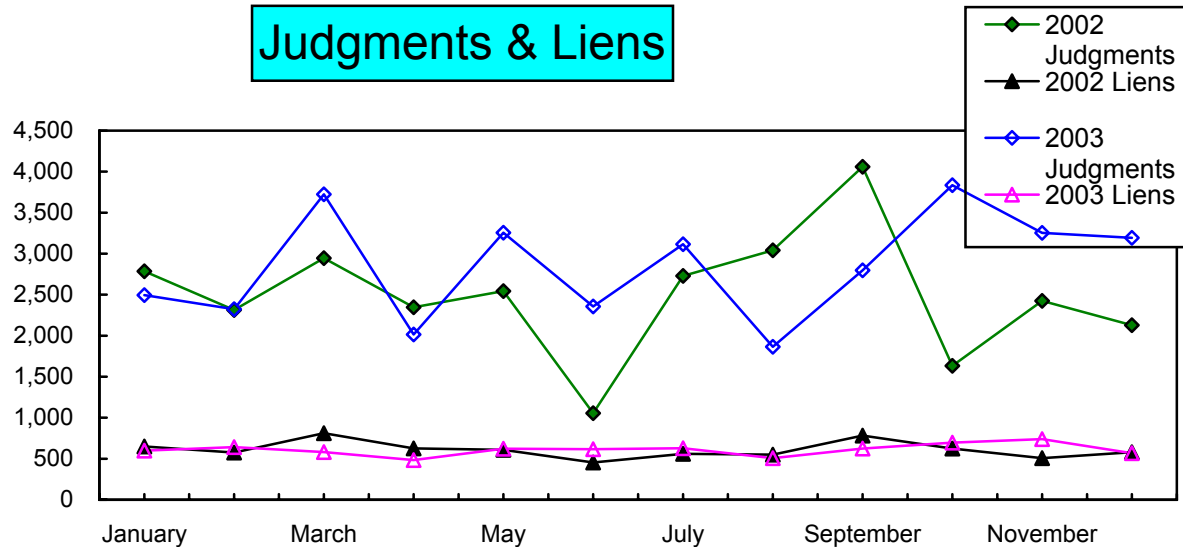
### Court Fund Disbursement



**Judgments & Liens**

2003	Judgments	Liens	2002	Judgments	Liens
January	2,495	599	January	2,785	649
February	2,323	642	February	2,314	575
March	3,724	582	March	2,946	811
April	2,015	483	April	2,347	627
May	3,256	622	May	2,543	608
June	2,357	616	June	1,055	454
July	3,115	629	July	2,728	559
August	1,864	507	August	3,040	551
September	2,798	625	September	4,059	783
October	3,834	696	October	1,632	624
November	3,254	739	November	2,424	508
December	3,194	567	December	2,129	580
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,229</b>	<b>7,307</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>30,002</b>	<b>7,329</b>

The Erie County Clerk's Office is responsible for the filing and recording of all judgment and lien records in Erie County. In 2003, judgments rose 13% while liens remained constant.

**Judgments & Liens**

<b>Hunting &amp; Fishing Licenses</b>	
<b>2003</b>	<b>Processed</b>
<b>January</b>	1
<b>February</b>	0
<b>March</b>	13
<b>April</b>	30
<b>May</b>	27
<b>June</b>	22
<b>July</b>	21
<b>August</b>	90
<b>September</b>	299
<b>October</b>	83
<b>November</b>	16
<b>December</b>	2
<b>2003</b>	604
<b>Month Ave.</b>	50

In 2003, a total of 604 hunting and fishing licenses were issued by the Erie County Clerk's Office, which acts as an agent for the New York Department of Environmental Conservation providing this service to residents. The office collected \$10,497 for hunting and fishing licenses, of which the County retained \$734 and remitted \$9,763 to the State of New York.

In 2003, a total of 3,315 Notary Public licenses were issued by the Erie County Clerk's Office, which acts as an agent for the New York State Secretary of State providing this service to residents. Also 902 Commissioner of Deeds were filed.

The Erie County Clerk's Office began accepting United States Passport applications in November 1997 for the U.S. Department of State. The Clerk's Office processed 288 applications in 2003 as yet another service to County residents.

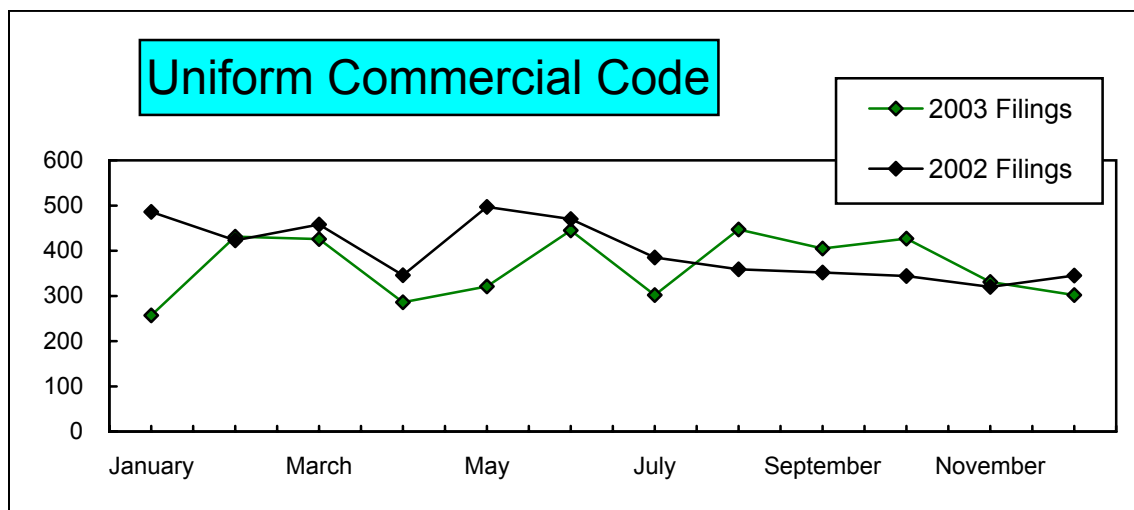
<b>Notary Public</b>	
<b>2003</b>	<b>Notary filings</b>
<b>January</b>	589
<b>February</b>	701
<b>March</b>	586
<b>April</b>	437
<b>May</b>	319
<b>June</b>	115
<b>July</b>	47
<b>August</b>	83
<b>September</b>	211
<b>October</b>	44
<b>November</b>	1
<b>December</b>	2
<b>2003</b>	3,135
<b>Month Ave.</b>	261

<b>Passport Applications</b>	
<b>2003</b>	<b>Processed</b>
<b>January</b>	41
<b>February</b>	16
<b>March</b>	31
<b>April</b>	28
<b>May</b>	15
<b>June</b>	22
<b>July</b>	20
<b>August</b>	22
<b>September</b>	22
<b>October</b>	13
<b>November</b>	26
<b>December</b>	32
<b>2003</b>	288
<b>Month Ave.</b>	24

<b>Uniform Commercial Code</b>		
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>
<b>January</b>	257	486
<b>February</b>	431	423
<b>March</b>	426	458
<b>April</b>	286	346
<b>May</b>	321	497
<b>June</b>	445	470
<b>July</b>	302	385
<b>August</b>	447	359
<b>September</b>	405	352
<b>October</b>	427	344
<b>November</b>	331	320
<b>December</b>	302	345
<b>Total</b>	4,380	4,785
<b>Month Ave.</b>	365	399

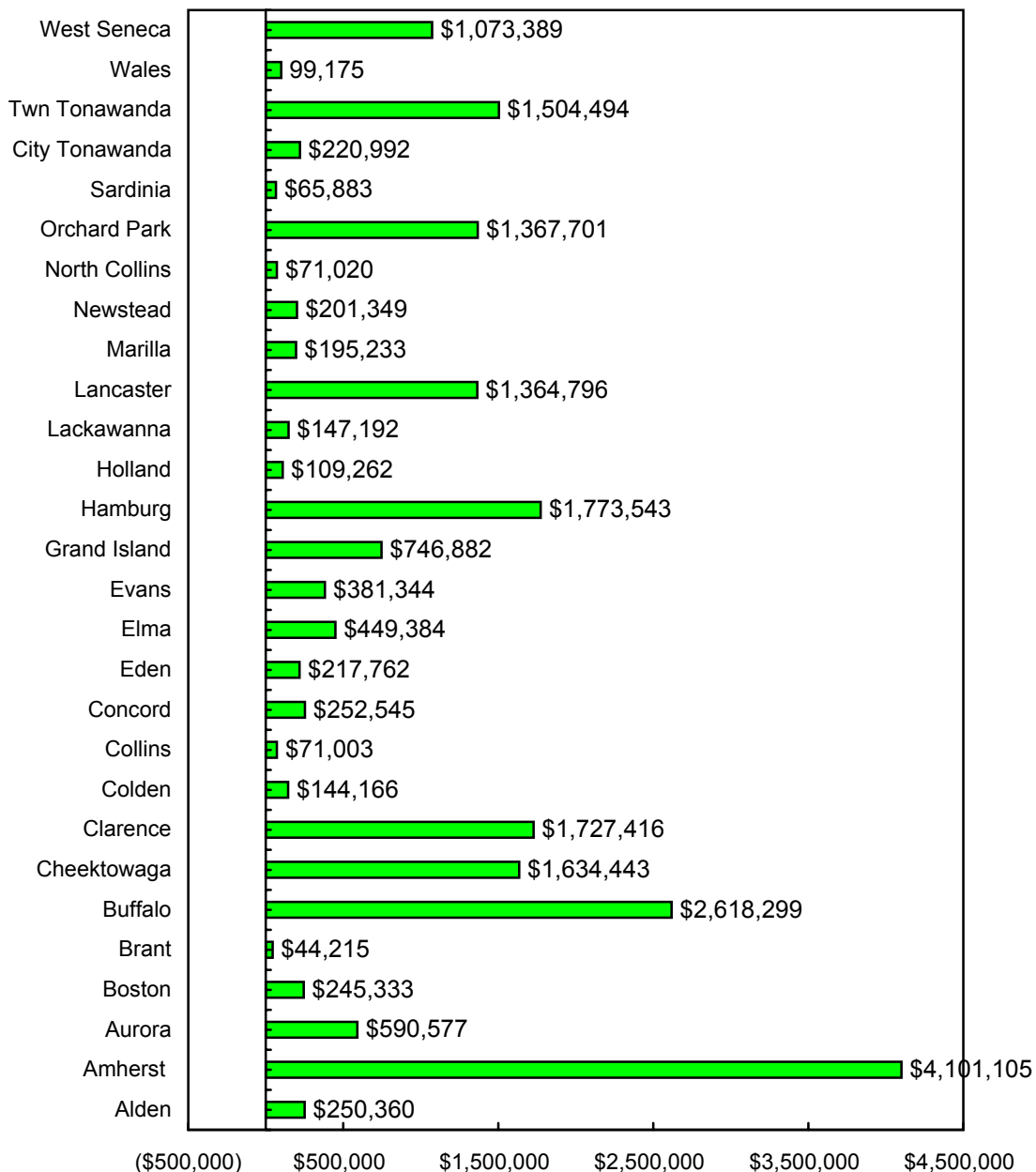
In 2003, a total of 4380 filings for Uniform Commercial Code documents were completed by the Erie County Clerk's Office. Included in that figure are 1153 Federal Tax Liens and releases.

**Note: Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) is a filing of security interests in personal and commercial transactions.**



<b>Commissioner of Education Funding</b>	
Collected in Erie County	\$3,633,230
Disbursed to Commissioner of Education	\$3,451,454
Disbursed to County	\$181,776

## Mortgage Tax Distributions



### Mortgage Tax Town Comparison

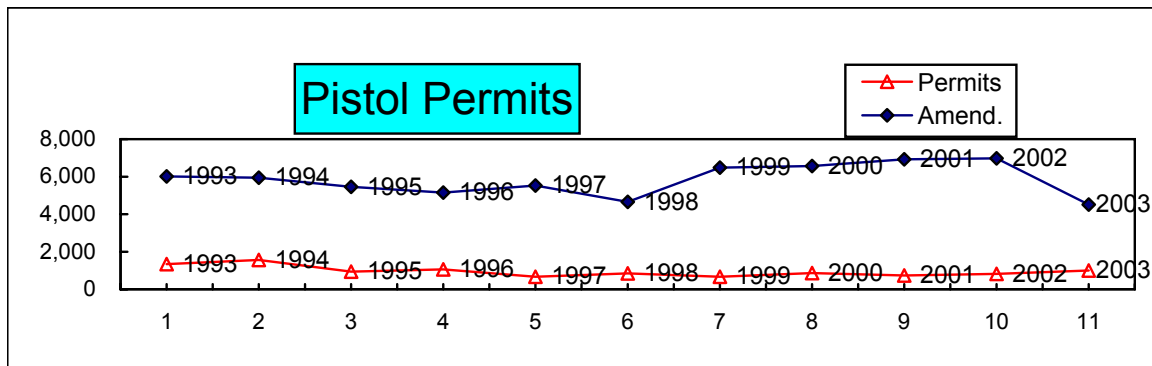
1997	\$9,717,297
1998	\$13,808,891
1999	\$12,229,066
2000	\$11,328,254
2001	\$13,748,909
2002	\$17,793,157
2003	\$21,668,863

The Erie County Clerk's Office recorded 60,749 mortgages in 2003, the highest in Clerk's Office history. This resulted in \$41,760,432 in mortgage taxes collected. In addition to the \$21,668,863 for Erie County cities and towns, the NFTA received \$18,682,443 and SONYMA received \$1,252,848 as set forth by law.

Pistol Permits		
Year	Permits	Amend.
1993	1,336	6,012
1994	1,564	5,946
1995	940	5,461
1996	1,054	5,150
1997	661	5,526
1998	844	4,658
1999	665	6,479
2000	860	6,570
2001	731	6,923
2002	816	6,980
2003	994	4,511

Beginning in 2003, the Erie County Clerk's Office has become a "one-stop" shop for processing pistol permits. Now applicants can have fingerprinting done and photos taken right in the Pistol Permit Department, saving considerable time and effort.

Since the Clerk's Office assumed administrative responsibility for the Pistol Permits Department in 1987, the number of new pistol permits issued annually has been level, and even declined in recent years. Also note that amendments to existing permits largely outnumber the number of new permits issued.



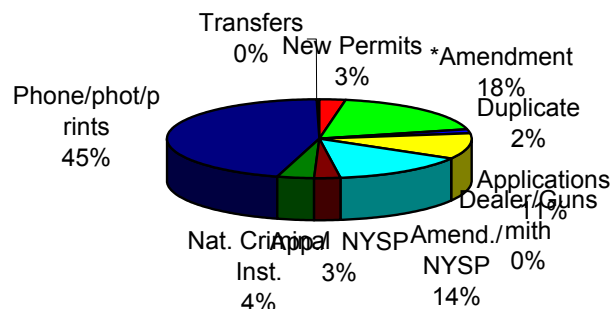
In 2003, the Erie County Pistol Permit Department assumed full responsibility for background checks for municipalities served by Erie County Sheriff's Department, and began a pilot project with a number of towns to take over background checks to free up law enforcement personnel for more pressing matters.

### Pistol Permit Service

New Permits	994
*Amendment	6,609
Duplicate	557
Applications	3,796
Dealer/Gunsmith	35
Amend./ NYSP	5,138
App./ NYSP	1,010
Nat. Criminal Inst.	1,464
Phone/phot/prints	16,190
Transfers	134
Cust. Service Units	35,927

\* Amendment is an addition or deletion to an individual permit.

### Pistol Permit Service



## ERIE COUNTY AUTO BUREAU DESCRIPTION

This multifaceted division acts as an agent for the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. The central office is located in Buffalo with other full service offices in Amherst, Depew/Cheektowaga and Orchard Park. Each office offers extended hours and the Cheektowaga office also provides service on Saturdays. **THE ERIE COUNTY AUTO BUREAU CONTINUES TO PROVIDE MORE CUSTOMER SERVICE HOURS THAN ANY OTHER AUTO BUREAU IN NEW YORK STATE.**

The Erie County Auto Bureau is responsible for many complex motor vehicle and driver related transactions. These include:

### LICENSE

Original  
Renewals  
Permits  
Commercial Driver License  
Non-driver Identification  
Written exams  
Vision examination  
Language Translation  
Oral examinations

### VEHICLE REGISTRATION

Original/Renewals  
Dealer plates/transactions  
Boats  
Motorcycle  
ATV  
Trailer  
Campers  
Taxi  
Livery  
Passenger  
Commercial  
Official  
Handicapped  
In-transit permit  
Intra-transit permit  
Sales Tax Transactions

The Erie County Auto Bureau collected \$28.6 million (including sales tax) in 2003 and retained \$2.91 million. Licenses increased 14% over the previous year. However, volume and revenue continue to be temporarily driven by the State's mandates and schedules on license renewals, thus volume and revenues are likely to drop. Currently, the County retention fee is based on 12.7% of gross revenue of most transactions. Labor-intensive transactions like enforcement and financial security, however, provide little or no revenue.

In July 2003, the Erie County Auto Bureau began providing Mobile Auto Bureau service to all four corners of Erie County. The Mobile Unit has averaged 700 transactions per month since October, resulting in \$3000 monthly revenue, much of which would have been collected in adjacent counties. The Mobile Unit operates from 10 am – 3:00pm on Tuesdays at the Evans Town Hall, Wednesdays at the Grand Island Town Hall, Thursdays at the Concord Town Hall and Fridays at the Clarence Library on Goodrich Road. This unit has been extremely well received by residents in these and in neighboring communities. As word travels about the availability of this convenience, transactions are expected to increase significantly in 2004.

**ENFORCEMENT AND FINANCIAL SECURITY**

Thousands of Erie County residents will use the services, which are provided at each of the four auto bureaus. **Suspension notices** for lapse of insurance are many times sent to customers when there is a change in the insurance carrier. A substantial portion of suspensions are erroneous and must be cleared up by our enforcement section personnel. Many motorists fail to keep continuous insurance coverage, resulting in fines, vehicle suspensions and, in cases over 90 days, license suspensions.

**Conditional licenses** are issued to motorists (through a court finding) who have been convicted of drug or alcohol related offenses. These present complicated situations which require individualized counseling. Our enforcement staff has been trained to provide personalized quality service in that area.

**Other points of emphasis include:**

- . Under the new graduated licensing law that went into effect on September 1, 2003, drivers under age 18 must hold a learner's permit for at least 6 months before they can take a road test and obtain a junior license. At least 20 hours of on-the-road experience with a driving instructor or a driver over 21 at their side is mandatory.
- . Restricted and conditional licenses for motorists recently convicted of an alcohol or drug related violation in New York State.
- . Co-ordination and scheduling of the Drinking Driver Program (DDP)
- . "Dead beat" Parents: The law requires the DMV and Department of Social Services to establish procedures for license suspension for parents delinquent in child support or child/spouse support payments. Warning letters of license suspension or denial are sent to delinquent parents.
- . Insurance lapse. The Auto Bureau administers the New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law that requires motor vehicles registered in this state to maintain liability insurance during the entire period of registration. If the registrant's liability insurance is being terminated or is not being renewed, the registrant must obtain replacement insurance or surrender the vehicle registration and plates to a motor vehicle office before the effective date of insurance termination. The NYS DMV has amended the current law by adding the directive that not only shall the insurance carrier who is dropping a client notify the State Office of Insurance Services, but the carrier who is now insuring the client must show proof of instatement. This new program is called IIES.

## **EDUCATIONAL AND COST SAVINGS INITIATIVES**

We continue to pursue improvement in cost efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. The Erie County Auto Bureau staff works internally and externally in a number of areas. They include:

**A.) Cross Training** - We continue to cross-train staff members, enabling the offices to function more efficiently since the transition to one stop.

**B.) Networking** - Continue to develop a communication network with representatives from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles issuing office communications unit (IOCU), driver improvement, office of field investigations and the State DMV District Office. These representatives visit our offices to interact and disseminate information directly to Erie County Auto Bureau employees. Ongoing identification training regarding requirements for immigrants is provided to the staff by agents of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service. The County's Employee Assistance Program provides dealing-with-difficult-customers training to the staff as needed and offers group or individual sessions. The County's office of Senior Services periodically instructs the staff on the Older Driver Program, designed to assist families of older drivers.

**C.) Educational** - In an effort to educate the public about the benefit of obtaining a non-driver I.D. card, informational meetings have been held at various schools and Senior Citizens Centers throughout Erie County.

## **TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT AT WORK IN CLERK'S OFFICE**

**1. Creation of Teams.** Each of the four offices of the Auto Bureau has formed various teams to identify consistent objectives which lead to the goal of achieving uniformity in overall procedures for the offices. The result is to achieve excellence in customer service and total quality management:

- a) Management Team
- b) Audit Team
- c) Office Supply Team
- d) Training Team

**2. In depth training.** With the transition to one stop offices, less knowledgeable employees are paired with those who can teach their expertise in an actual work environment on an ongoing basis. Together with the above mentioned cross training and networking, employees in the Auto Bureau are now provided a more in-depth training than ever before.

**PROGRAM AND SERVICE INITIATIVES**

**The National Voter Registration Act**, commonly known as the Motor Voter Law, requires the Auto Bureau to offer its customers the opportunity to complete a voter registration application while completing any transaction involving a drivers license or non-driver Identification. Our offices perform over 2 million customer service transactions each year, and are uniquely equipped to offer this important voter registration service. In Erie County there are approximately 230,000 residents of voting age who are not registered to vote. **In 2003, the Erie County Auto Bureau registered 15,629 local residents, -- a 25% increase over 2002—**Proof that citizens are taking advantage of this opportunity.

**Organ And Tissue Donation** - The back of the license and non-driver identification card offers a personal choice that may save a life of a loved one or critically ill person. The Erie County Auto Bureau and Upstate New York Transplant Services, Inc., remain partners in this on-going initiative. Permanent displays, identifying the need for organ donation in our community, are mounted in each Auto Bureau office. UNYTS representatives have indicated that approximately one-half of the inquiries into their services come from the Erie County Auto Bureau offices.

**License Abstract** - Although all over-the-counter abstracts are excluded from the gross revenue receipts, customers now have the ability to immediately obtain an abstract of their driving record.

**ERIE COUNTY AUTO BUREAU  
VISION STATEMENT**

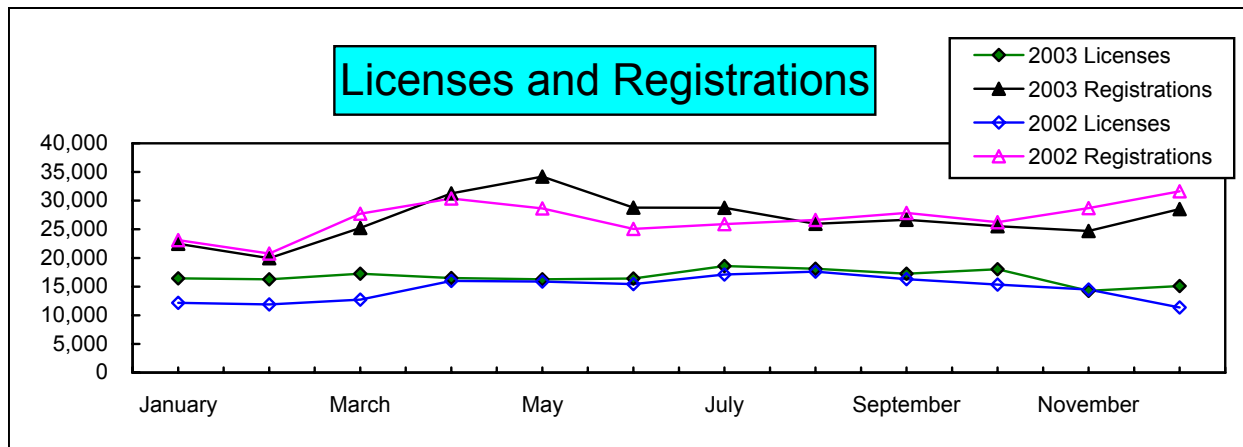
The Erie County Auto Bureau will be a place where:

- . There is a highly knowledgeable, efficient and motivated staff.
- . We continue to utilize technology to improve work flow and increase efficiency and cost effectiveness in all operations.
- . There is clear and continuous communication both internally and externally.
- . All staff members are empowered as partners in decision making.
- . There is a clear method for recognizing and encouraging excellence and commitment to quality.
- . We continue to serve as a benchmark among agencies for excellence in Customer Service.

### Licenses & Registrations

	2003 License	2003 Registrations	2002 License	2002 Registrations
<b>January</b>	16,436	22,462	12,167	23,119
<b>February</b>	16,287	19,947	11,904	20,759
<b>March</b>	17,260	25,245	12,718	27,707
<b>April</b>	16,493	31,257	15,999	30,380
<b>May</b>	16,261	34,181	15,876	28,636
<b>June</b>	16,423	28,771	15,430	25,072
<b>July</b>	18,580	28,762	17,122	25,916
<b>August</b>	18,122	25,959	17,617	26,628
<b>September</b>	17,252	26,656	16,313	27,850
<b>October</b>	18,046	25,546	15,365	26,227
<b>November</b>	14,265	24,691	14,483	28,704
<b>December</b>	15,089	28,523	11,372	31,626
<b>Total</b>	200,514	322,000	176,366	322,624
<b>Month Ave.</b>	16,709	26,833	14,697	26,885

The Erie County Auto Bureau performed 200,514 license transactions and 322,000 registration transactions in 2003 -- more transactions than any county-operated auto bureau in New York State. That is a total of 520,514 transactions, up slightly from 498,990 in 2002. It is likely that the number of transactions will decrease over the next year, as the state-mandated cycle of license renewals results in fewer renewals each year.



Year	New Cars-Trucks	Used Cars-Trucks	Annual Total
<b>1997</b>	65,982	16,056	<b>82,038</b>
<b>1998</b>	63,366	16,835	<b>80,201</b>
<b>1999</b>	72,535	16,261	<b>88,796</b>
<b>2000</b>	70,048	17,085	<b>87,133</b>
<b>2001</b>	68,309	19,872	<b>88,181</b>
<b>2002</b>	73,172	20,202	<b>93,374</b>
<b>2003</b>	78,968	21,380	<b>100,348</b>

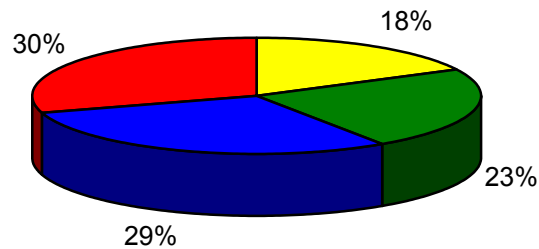
*Niagara Frontier Automobile Dealers Association figures*

## 2003 Auto Bureau Retention Fees

21

Office Location	Collected	Sales Tax	Total
Buffalo	\$502,053	\$10,058	\$512,111
Amherst	\$651,725	\$14,533	\$666,258
Cheektowaga *	\$849,215	\$18,240	\$867,455
Orchard Park	\$850,723	\$17,575	\$868,298
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,853,716</b>	<b>\$60,406</b>	<b>\$2,914,122</b>

### 2003 Auto Bureau Retention Fees



Erie County retains only a portion of the fees collected by the County Clerk in the Erie County Auto Bureau. Of the \$28,643,128 (including sales taxes) collected in 2003 by the Erie County Auto Bureau, it retained \$2,914,122.

Saturday Hours			Revenue per Employee	
	2002	2003	FTEs	82
Transactions	19,522	21,573	Gross Revenue	\$28,643,128
Retention Fees	\$84,429	\$97,593	Gross Revenue per FTE	<b>\$349,306</b>
Gross Revenue	\$961,813	\$1,075,008	<i>FTE : Full-Time Equivalent</i> <i>*Cheektowaga figures include Saturday Hours</i>	
Ave. Gross Revenue per Saturday	<b>\$21,859</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>		
Ave. Expense	\$1,311	\$1,338		

Ten years ago this month, the Erie County Auto Bureau began Saturday hours in its Cheektowaga office. The heavy revenue figures in the "Saturday Hours" graph above show Erie County residents continue to visit the auto bureau on Saturdays in large numbers to complete their motor vehicle business.

The following is a compilation of all fees collected and disbursed by the Clerk's Office.

**DAVID J. SWARTS, ERIE COUNTY CLERK**

Collections and Disbursements of 2003 Revenues

**AUTO BUREAU**

Collections

Auto Bureau - Registrations	\$22,052,587
Auto Bureau - New York State Sales Tax	6,590,543
Auto Bureau - Total Collections	<u>\$28,643,130</u>

Disbursements

Deposited with Erie County Commissioner of Finance:	
Registrations	\$ 2,869,065
Sales Tax	60,665
Remitted to the State of New York:	
Registrations	19,183,522
Sales Tax	<u>6,529,878</u>
Auto Bureau - Total Disbursements	<u>\$28,643,130</u>

**COURTS**

Collections

Court Fund:	
County	\$3,963,377
Small Claims Assessment Review	<u>5,910</u>
Court - Total Collections	<u>\$ 3,969,287</u>

Disbursements

Index Fees to Cultural	\$ 192,845
Index Fees to Commissioner of Education Account	\$ 73,030
Deposited with Erie County Commissioner of Finance:	
Clerk's Fees	187,900
Remitted to NYS Office of Court Administration	<u>\$ 3,515,512</u>
Court - Total Disbursements	<u>\$ 3,969,287</u>

**HUNTING AND FISHING****Collections**

Hunting and Fishing - County - Over the Counter  
Hunting and Fishing - Total Collections \$ 10,497

**Disbursements**

Hunting and Fishing  
Remitted to New York State \$ 9,763  
Remitted to County General Fund 734  
\$ 10,497

**INTEREST****Interest Earned**

Transfer Tax - Remitted to New York State and Erie County  
Auto Bureau - Remitted to Commissioner of Finance  
NFTA Interest  
Interest earned from investments with County Comptroller  
  
\$ 30,404

**MORTGAGE TAX****SUSPENSE ACCOUNT****Collections**

Mortgage Tax Account  
Suspense Account (Mortgage Tax collected in more than  
one Tax District, held for apportionment by NYS)  
Beginning Balance, January 1, 2002 \$ 74,451  
Add present year collection 332,577  
  
Total Mortgage Tax held for Apportionment by New York State \$ 407,028

**Disbursements**

Mortgage Tax Account  
Apportionments ordered by NYS - Erie County \$ 295,808  
Apportionments ordered by NYS - Outside Erie Co. 16,291  
Refunds - ordered by NYS 2,100  
Mortgage Tax held for future  
apportionments, December 31, 2002 94,929  
\$ 407,02

**MORTGAGE TAX****REGULAR ACCOUNT****Collections**

Mortgage Tax - Total Collections \$41,760,432

**Disbursements**

Deposited with Erie County Commissioner of Finance:

Mortgage Tax - Regular Account	\$ 21,500,141
Mortgage Tax - Salary Disbursements	325,000
Remitted to NFTA	18,682,443
Remitted to New York State Mortgage Agency	1,252,848

Refunds to Individuals - ordered by New York State	<u>0</u>
	<u>\$41,760,432</u>

**STATE NOTARY**

**Collections** \$ 154,560

**Disbursements**

To State	\$ 103,040
To County	<u>\$ 51,520</u>
	<u>\$ 154,560</u>

**Stop DWI**

**Collections** \$ 46,654

**Disbursements** \$ 46,654

**TRANSFER TAX****Collections**

## Transfer Tax

Total Collections	<u>\$ 8,169,084</u>
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**Disbursements**

Transfer Tax / Retention Fees	\$ 23,855
Remitted to New York State	<u>\$ 8,145,229</u>
Total Disbursements	<u>\$ 8,169,084</u>

**GENERAL FUND**

Deposited with Erie County Commissioner of Finance:

\* (includes Auto Bureau, Mortgage Tax, Transfer Tax, Court Fees, Hunting and Fishing, Interest Earned, Small Claims Assessment Review Forms, Recording and Filing Fees, Naturalization, Commissioner of Education, Pistol Permit Fees)

	<u>\$10,295,452</u>
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\*\* Checks are written off against General Fund Before remittance  
2003 NSF write off totaled \$1,970.40

\* Below is a breakdown of the exact retention each contributed to the General Fund

Auto Bureau	
DMV Fees	\$2,869,065
Sales Tax	60,665
Total	<u>\$ 2,929,730</u>

Registrar	
Mortgage Tax	325,000
Refund of Prior Year Expenses	0
Transfer Tax	23,855
Commissioner of Education	195,318
Court Fees	186,775
Small Claims Assessment Fees	1,125
Pistol Permits	31,053
Recording, Filing and Torrens Fees	5,837,853
Interest	30,404
Equalization Fee	189,275
Summary Page Fee	545,064
Total	<u>\$ 7,365,722</u>

Total Retention Fees	<u>\$10,295,452</u>
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**COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION**

Commissioner of Education - Records Management	908,440
- Cultural	2,724,790

<u>Collections</u>	<u>\$3,633,230</u>
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**Disbursements**

To State Commissioner of Education	746,914
To State c/e Cultural	1,173,772
To County	101,089
Total Disbursements	<u>\$ 2,021,775</u>

**EQUALIZATION**

<u>Collections</u>	<u>\$1,128,350</u>
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**Disbursements**

To State	\$ 939,032
To County	189,318
	<u>\$1,128,350</u>

**ERIE COUNTY ROAD FUND**

<u>Collections</u>	<u>\$ 9,268,848</u>
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**Disbursements**

General Fund	\$ 9,249,506
Refunds	19,342
Total Disbursements	<u>\$ 9,268,848</u>

Comparison of 1999 - 2003 Collections

**Auto Bureau**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
DMV Fees	\$20,710,546	\$15,349,916	\$18,931,823	\$19,930,588	\$19,183,522
Sales Tax	\$6,080,794	\$6,031,806	\$6,042,097	6,257,959	\$6,529,878
County General Fund	\$2,474,897	\$2,120,490	\$2,544,809	2,783,510	\$2,929,730

**Registrar's Office**

Courts	\$3,182,334	\$3,230,512	\$3,266,023	\$3,419,172	\$3,969,287
Hunting & Fishing	\$11,590	\$10,950	\$11,772	14,473	\$10,497
Interest	\$77,153	\$106,614	\$70,277	40,653	\$30,404
Mortgage Tax Suspense	\$961,456	\$1,227,254	\$538,226	780,446	\$407,028
Collected for Towns	\$11,958,611	\$11,050,056	\$13,748,909	17,793,157	\$21,500,141
Notary	\$116,740	\$122,110	\$181,200	\$363,720	\$154,560
Transfer Tax (NYS)	\$6,533,308	\$6,316,125	\$6,480,314	7,098,414	\$8,169,084
Road Fund	\$7,302,920	\$7,270,437	\$7,370,999	8,039,511	\$9,268,848
Commissioner of Education	693,820	604,320	676,715	786,225	\$908,440
Equalization	615,850	607,275	619,100	657,325	\$1,128,350
County General Fund	4,329,664	3,969,242	4,918,994	3,689,201	\$7,365,722
NSF Check Write Off	\$664	\$512	\$1,044	\$1,723	\$1,970
Pistol Permits	\$26,841	\$27,568	\$27,630	28,806	\$31,053
Stop DWI	\$39,817	\$45,400	\$66,747	42,188	\$46,654
C/E Cultural				1,235,550	\$2,724,790

- a Notary collections increased to 4 year terms
- b Collections began in 1997 from drunk driving convictions and benefit Stop DWI program
- c Commissioner of Education Cultural began July, 2002